

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NOUAKC 01435 01 OF 02 171219Z

41

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

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P 161155Z JUL 75

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4097

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 1 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 1435

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PBOR SS MR SP MO AG

SUBJECT: SAHARA WATCH: DESIRABILITY OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN
DECOLONIZATION OF SPANISH SAHARA

REF: MADRID 4839

1. SUMMARY: SEEN FROM OPTIC OF NOUAKCHOTT, PROPOSED DIRECT
INVOLVEMENT OF U.S. IN SEARCH FOR RESOLUTION OF SPANISH SAHARA
PROBLEM RAISES SERIOUS QUESTIONS. INTERVENTION BY U.S. AT THIS
STAGE WOULD NOT APPEAR TO BE USEFUL IN TERMS OF SEARCH FOR DE-
COLONIZATION SOLUTION NOR DESIRABLE FROM POINT OF VIEW OF U.S.
INTERESTS. GIVEN SERIES OF POLITICAL AND LEGAL ACTIVITIES
NOW UNDERWAY, IT WOULD APPEAR PREFERABLE FOR U.S. TO HOLD OFF
ON ANY DIRECT INTERVENTION IN SAHARA DISPUTE, EXCEPT PERHAPS
FOR SERIES OF BILATERAL APPROACHES URGING ALL THOSE INVOLVED
TO "COOL IT," AND ALLOW BEHIND-CLOSED-DOORS MANEUVERING NOW
UNDERWAY TO BEAR FRUIT. END SUMMRY.

2. NUMBER OF KEY ELEMENTS OF SAHARA PROBLEM ARE ONLY
DIMLY PERCEPTIBLE AT THIS STAGE. FACTS ARE NOT YET
AVAILABLE ON SOME COMPLETED ACTIONS; OTHER RELEVANT
ACTIVITIES ARE STILL UNDERWAY; STILL OTHERS ARE UPCOMING.
WE DO NOT KNOW SCOPE OR TERMS OF REPORTED MOROCCAN-
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PAGE 02 NOUAKC 01435 01 OF 02 171219Z

ALGERIAN "DEAL," OR INDEED IF DEAL WAS STRUCK. WHILE

SPANISH REPRESENTATIVES IN MADRID, ALGIERS, AND NOUAK-CHOTT HAVE ASSERTED KING AND BOUMEDIENE HAVE NOT IN FACT REACHED AGREEMENT, PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN MOROCCO AND ALGAEIA AND U.S. REPORTING SUGGESTS TO CONTRARY. SAHARA PROCEEDINGS AT HAGUE COURT ARE STILL GOING ON, AND HANDING DOWN OF ADVISORY OPINION IS NOT EVEN PLANNED UNTIL EARLY FALL. MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN EXPLANATORY MISSIONS IN AFRICA, ARAB WORLD, AND LATIN AMERICA ARE AT MID-POINT, AND WE DO NOT AS YET HAVE ANY FIRM INDICATION OF THEIR OUTCOME. WE ARE SKEPTICAL OF GIRM FOREIGN MINISTER OULD MOUKNASS' ASSERTION THAT AFRICAN CHIEFS OF STATE HAVE EXPRESSED COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN POSITION AND HAVE PLEDGED SUPPORT, BUT WE HAVE NO FACTS BEYOND ISOLATED EXAMPLES OF TOGO DECLARATION AND ZAIRE PRESENTATION TO INTERNATIONAL COURT. LAST MAJOR AREAS OF UNCERTAINTY IS UPCOMING OAU MEETING. ACCORDING MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR TO MAURITANIA MAHJOUHI, WHO WAS WORKING-LEVEL CHAIRMAN OF RECENT OAU DECOLONIZATION COMMITTEE MEETING IN RABAT, SAHARA IS ON OAU AGENDA AS ONE OF SERIES DECOLONIZATION PROBLEMS. WHILE FOREIGN MINISTERS AND CHIEFS OF STATE MAY NOT TAKE ANY FORMAL ACTION ON SAHARA DISPUTE BEYOND URGING SPAIN TO GET OUT, FUTURE OF SAHARA WILL INEVITABLY BE MAJOR TOPIC OF INFORMAL COLLATERAL DISCUSSIONS AND CORRIDOR CONVERSATIONS. IF OAU MEMBERS RUN TRUE TO FORM, MAURITANIANS AND MOROCCANS WILL BE ON RECEIVING END OF SOME VERY XINBDK TAVF ABOUT SELF-DETERMINATION AND OAU'S LONGSTANDING AND VIGOROUS OPPOSITION TO IRREDENTIST SOLUTIONS TO AFRICAN TERRITORIAL DISPUTES. IMPACT OF SUCH TALK ON MAURITANIA AMYVMOGMCCO IS DIFFICULT TO PREDICT, BUT IT SEEMS CERTAIN THAT STRONG OAU MAJORITY AGAINST PARTITION WILL AT VERY LEAST AFFECT MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN TACTICS.

3. LOOKING BACK OVER SERIES OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND PRIVATE COMMENTS BY GIRM OFFICIALS, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT MAURITANIANS ARE POINTING FOR UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, AND HAVE DEVISED THEIR POLITICAL TACTICS TO TAKE MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE ON DECOLONIZATION OF SAHAR. DESPATCH OF THREE EXPLANATORY MISSIONS SUGGESTS THAT GIRM HAS CONCLUDED THAT CHANCES OF OBTAINING CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 NOUAKC 01435 01 OF 02 171219Z

GENERAL APPROVAL OF MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN PARTITION OF SAHARA ARE SIGNIFICANTLY BETTER IN UNGA THAN IN AOU IN VIEW OF (A) GREATER REPRESENTATION OF ARAB STATES, (B) PARTICIPATION OF NON-AFRICAN THPRD WORLDERS WHO ARE LESS WEDDED TO ACCEPTANCE OF COLONIAL FRONTIERS, AND (C) INVOLVEMENT OF OTHER NATIONS WHOSE ONLY INTEREST IN SAHARA DISPUTE IS IN INSURING NONVIOLENT RESOLUTION. NEVER-

THELSS, IT IS NOT CLEAR AT THIS POINT HOW GIRM SEES
UNGA CONSIDERATION OF SAHARA PROBLEM EVOLVING BEYOND
ACCEPTANCE OF ADVISORY OPINION RECORDING EXISTENCE
MAURITANIANA-MOROCCAN HEGEMONY PRIOR ARRIVAL SPANISH.
IT IS POSSIBLE THAT GIRM HAS BEEN TOO OCCUPIED WITH
OTHER ASPECTS OF PROBLEM TO HAVE ADDRESSED QUESTION OF
GA TACTICS IN ANY DETAIL AS YET.

4. SPANISH HAVE REPEATEDLY MADE THEIR INTENTION OF
RESORTING TO UN KNOWN TO US, TO SYG, AND TO INTERESTED
PUBLIC. AT THIS POINT, HOWEVER, WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT
MAURITANIAN, MOROCCAN, OR ALGERIAN RESPONSE WILL BE TO
SPANISH EFFORT TO SECURE UN SPONSORSHIP OF SAHARA CON-
FERENCE. TO EXTENT GIRM SEES SPANISH MOVE AS ATTEMPT
TO FORCE ISSUE, TO PREJUDGE RESULT, OR TO ESCAPE FROM
CONTINUING TO MEET RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH SPAIN BEARS
AS RESULT OF ITS YEARS OF PROFITTING FROM ITS POSITION
AS COLONIZER, GIRM CAN BE EXPECTED TO REACT VIGOROUSLY
AND NEGATIVELY, JUST AS IT DID TO SPAIN'S INITIAL AN-
NOUNCEMENT OF ITS INTENTION TO PULL OUT IN NEXT FEW
MONTHS (NOUAKCHOTT 1074). ON OTHER HAND, UN SPONSOR-
SHIP IN GOOD TIME OF CONFERENCE ON SAHARA MIGHT MEET
WITH DIFFERENT REACTION. PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH HAS
ANNOUNCED PUBLICLY THAT GIRM WILL NOT RPT NOT PARTICI-
PATE IN FOUR-POWER CONFERENCE BUT DECLARATION WAS

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PAGE 01 NOUAKC 01435 02 OF 02 170925Z

10
ACTION SS-25

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----- 090263
P 161155Z JUL 75
FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
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INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 2 OF 2 NOUAKCHOTT 1435

EXDIS

CLEARLY IN CONTEXT OF SPANISH SPONSORSHIP. FOREIGN
MINISTER HAS STATED PUBLICLY THAT ONLY PRACTICAL APPROACH
TO AHARA SOLUTION IS DIRECANEGOTIATIONS AMONG MAURITANIA,
MOROCCO, AND SPAIN. BUT AT SAME TIME, MOUKNASS TOLD PRESS
THAT DECOLONIZATION OF SAHARA MUST BE WORKED OUT IN CONTEXT
OF UNITED NATIONS. IT IS THUS CONCEIVABLE THAT GIRM MIGHT
RESPONS FAVORABLY TO CALL FROM SYG WALDHEIM FOR SAHARA
CONFERENCE. BUT IT IS MORE LIKELY GIRM WILL REITERATE
ITS BELIEF THAT THERE ARE ONLY TWO FORA FOR DISCUSSION
OF SAHARA DECOLONIZATION PROBLEM: A CONFERENCE OF MAURI-
TANIA, MOROCCO, AND SPAIN TO AGREE ON DETAILED LOGISTICS
OF HANDOVER TO MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO OR A UNGA DEBATE
ON PHILOSOPHY OF AND NECESSITY FOR DECOLONIZATION AND OF
MORAL IMPERATIVE OF ALLOWING A SINGLE PEOPLE TO REUNITE
AFTER FORCED COLONIAL SEPARATION, WITH DETAILS OF TRANSFER
OF AUTHORITY TO BE LEFT TO THREE PARTIES CONCERNED. GIVEN
FACT THAT GA DEBATE ON SAHARA IS ONLY THREE MONTHS AWAY,
GRM WOULD PROBABLY SEE LITTLE UTILITY IN ATTEMPTS TO
ORGANIZE SPECIAL CONFERENCE ON EVE OF GA, AND WOULD THERE-
FORE SIMPLY DECLINE TO RESPOND TO ANY CONFERENCE CALL.
SHOULD X HALL FOR CONFERENCE INCLUDE PROPOSAL OR RECOM-
MENDATION FOR DIRECT UN ROLE IN DECOLONIZATION PROCESS,
GIRM WOULD PROBABLY REITERATE ITS PREVIOUSLY-STAED OPP-
OSITION TO UN ON-SPOT INVOLEMENT OR EVEN TOKEN UN PRESENCE.
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PAGE 02 NOUAKC 01435 02 OF 02 170925Z

DEPARTMENT WILL RECALL MOUKNASS EVEN REJECTED WEST IRIAN
PRECEDENT AS NOT APPLICABLE TO SAHARA. (WHILE MOROCCAN
AMBASSADOR MAHJOURI INSISBTUNGA MUST DELEGATE TOTAL
RESPONSIBILITY FOR ARRANGING LOGISTICS OF HANDOVER TO
MOROCCO, MAURITANIA, AND SPAIN, HE INDICATED GOM MIGHT
BE PERSUADED TO ACCEPT UN-APPOINTED PERSONALITY TO ASSIST
THREE STATES TO WORK OQT DETAILED PROCEDURES IN PATTERN
ESTABLISHED BY AMBASSADOR BUNKER WITH INDONESIA AND
NETHERLANDS AND USED MORE RECENTLY IN DECOLONIZATION OF
BAHREIN.)

5. FROM OPTIC OF NOUAKCHOTT, PROPOSED DIRECT INVOLVEMENT
OF U.S. AT THIS STAGE IN SEARCH FOR RESOLUTION OF SAHARA
PROBLEM APPEARS PREMATURE AT BEST. WHILE EVIDENCE WILL
NEVER ALL BE IN, THE PROPORTION AVAILABLE WILL BE SIGNI-
FICANTLY GREATER IN EIGHT TO TEN WEEKS THAN AT PRESENT.
BY THEN, WE MAY HAVE BETTER IDEA OF CONTENT OF MAURITANIAN-
MOROCCAN PARTITION AGREEMENT AND OF MOROCCAN-ALGERIAN
"DEAL," IF ANY. RESULTS OF MAURITANIAN-MOROCCAN EXPLANA-
TORY MISSIONS SHOULD BECOME APPARENT FIRST AT OAU SUMMIT,
AND THEN AS GOVERNMENTS BEGIN TO WRITE INSTRUCTIONS FOR
THEIR GENERAL ASSEMBLY DELEGATIONS. MOREOVER, WHILE
SPANISH REQUEST FOR U.S. SUPPORT OF FOUR-POWER CONFER-

ENCE CALL APPEARS TO BE LIMITED TO TACTICS, PROPOSAL IM-
PLIES A PARTICULAR SUBSTANTIVE STANCE WHICH RUNS COUNTER
TO MAURITANIAN AND MOROCCAN POSITIONS.

6. FROM VANTAGE POINT OF CAPITAL OF SMALLEST AND LEAST
POWERFUL PLAYER, IT WOULD APPEAR MUCH WISER FOR USG
TO LIMIT ANY DEVIATION FROM STATUS OF INTERESTED
OBSERVER TO PARTICIPATION WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF INTER-
NATIONAL COMMUNITY, LED PERHAPS BY UN SYG, IN GENERALIZED
CALL ON ALL PARTIES TO ESCHEW VIOLENCE IN SAHARA DISPUTE.
IF WALDHEIM WERE TO LEAD OFF WITH PUBLIC APPEAL, USG
COULD APPROPRIATELY FOLLOW UP WITH BILATERAL APPROACHES
(PRIVATE QED/E PUBLIC) TO MAURITANIA, MOROCCO, ALGERIA,
AND SPAIN URGING ALL CONCERNED TO "COOL IT." STRESSING
IMPERATIVE NEED TO MAINTAIN PEACE AND TRANQUILITY TO
PERMIT WORKABLE SOLUTION ACCEPTABLE TO ALL TO EVOLVE.HANDYSIDE

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